

Psalm 85 — A Prayer for Restoration and Revival

Verses 1–3: God Has Shown Mercy Before

*“Lord, You have been favorable to Your land;
You have brought back the captivity of Jacob.
You have forgiven the iniquity of Your people;
You have covered all their sin.
You have taken away all Your wrath;
You have turned from the fierceness of Your anger.”* (vv. 1–3)

The psalm opens with a look back. The psalmist recalls a time when God showed mercy—restoring His people, forgiving their sins, and withdrawing His righteous judgment. This is not wishful thinking; it's grounded in the memory of God's covenant faithfulness.

Personal Application:

When you feel distant from God or burdened by the consequences of sin, remember what He's already done in your life. Recalling past grace builds present faith. God has not changed—what He did before, He can do again.

Verses 4–7: A Cry for Revival

*“Restore us, O God of our salvation,
And cause Your anger toward us to cease.
Will You be angry with us forever?
Will You prolong Your anger to all generations?
Will You not revive us again,
That Your people may rejoice in You?
Show us Your mercy, Lord,
And grant us Your salvation.”* (vv. 4–7)

The psalmist moves from remembrance to intercession. Though God has delivered them before, something is still missing. The people have returned to the land—but their hearts need to return to God. What's needed now is not just national peace but *spiritual renewal*.

Key Question:

“Will You not revive us again, that Your people may rejoice in You?”

That question still resonates today. Revival isn't about emotion or spectacle—it's about a renewed joy in God that flows from repentance and reconciliation.

Personal Application:

Has your heart grown cold? Do you feel like you're just going through the motions? Ask God to revive you—not for your comfort, but for His joy to be restored in you. Revival begins when we humbly admit our need and turn our hearts fully back to Him.

Verses 8–9: A Posture of Listening and Waiting

*“I will hear what God the Lord will speak,
For He will speak peace
To His people and to His saints;
But let them not turn back to folly.
Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him,
That glory may dwell in our land.”* (vv. 8–9)

This is a shift from crying out to waiting expectantly. The psalmist quiets his soul to listen: *“I will hear what God the Lord will speak.”* God desires to speak peace—but His peace is given to those who truly revere Him and who refuse to return to foolish living.

Personal Application:

God doesn’t shout over our distractions. Make space to hear Him. Set your heart to listen—not just for answers, but for peace. Revival without repentance is just noise; peace without surrender is fleeting.

Verses 10–13: A Vision of Restoration

*“Mercy and truth have met together;
Righteousness and peace have kissed.
Truth shall spring out of the earth,
And righteousness shall look down from heaven.
Yes, the Lord will give what is good;
And our land will yield its increase.
Righteousness will go before Him,
And shall make His footsteps our pathway.”* (vv. 10–13)

This closing is poetic and powerful. It paints a vision of what happens when God's presence returns in full: mercy and truth are no longer in conflict, righteousness and peace come together. Heaven and earth are aligned, and both spiritual and physical blessings follow.

Theological Insight:

This passage doesn't teach deterministic outcomes nor salvation by human merit. Instead, it illustrates that when people reverently return to God, He responds with grace, direction, and fruitfulness. God desires harmony between His righteousness and our restoration.

Personal Application:

Do you long to see righteousness and peace restored in your family, community, or nation? It begins with seeking God’s face, listening to His voice, and walking in His steps. God will give what is good—but we must walk in the path He marks out.

Final Reflection: God Is Ready to Restore

Psalm 85 is a prayer we can still pray today. It's rooted in remembrance of past mercies, grounded in a plea for present renewal, and lifted by hope for future blessing. The psalmist doesn't demand—he waits, listens, and trusts.

Ask yourself:

- Am I remembering what God has done—or just focusing on what feels broken now?
- Do I long for revival in my heart and community?
- Am I listening for God's voice or just talking at Him?
- Do I believe that mercy and truth can meet in my life?

"Surely His salvation is near to those who fear Him." (v. 9)